



The Weekly Page

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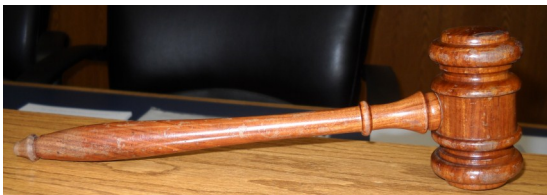
Pages Learn About Legislature



Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: governing is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day. As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

Pages write bills, hold mock hearings



During the first three days of their week, pages worked individually or in small groups

to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. They discussed the criteria for making a legislative solution work before selecting issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates on class computers to formulate official-looking documents in preparation for mock committee hearings on Thursday. Topics for policy bills included beekeeping, sleep deprived teens, and gun violence. Pages read their bills and class “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommen-

dation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

Legislators tighten gun laws



Olympia – House Bill 1111 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Samir Nasr, Hannah Young, and Tyler Vu. “This bill addresses the issue of gun control and will protect the lives of our family, neighbors and children,” said Rep. Vu. In the last 30 years, at least 62 mass shootings have occurred. Nearly 140 people died or were injured in 2012 alone from this type of gun violence, according to the representatives. If this bill becomes a law, assault weapons will be banned, the number of rounds of ammunition in a magazine will be reduced to 10, and stricter registration requirements will be enacted. “Nobody needs 30 bullets to protect themselves or to hunt a deer. If you can’t kill a deer with a couple bullets, I question your hunting abilities,” Said Rep. Nasr.

House bill promotes healthy lunches



Olympia – House Bill 2222 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Jayden Gilmore, Ryan McMahon, and Amy Williams.. “This bill

addresses the issue of childhood obesity and will help overweight children become more healthy,” said Rep. Gilmore. More than one in three middle school students who regularly eat school lunches are obese or overweight, according to the lawmakers’ research. Recent data shows that while an estimated 30.6 million U.S. students eat school lunches, only 6 percent of school lunch programs meet the requirements established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. “Childhood obesity has also been connected to type 2 diabetes, cancer, stroke and heart disease,” said Rep. McMahon. If this bill becomes a law, schools will be required to substitute foods that are high in fats, sugars and salt with more fruits and vegetables. Schools who wish to start school vegetable gardens to provide fresh food for lunches can partner with Washington State University extension programs which will be able to provide seeds and knowledge. “Once the gardens are self-sustaining, the schools should have saved enough money to continue to buy other needed supplies to keep them going,” said Rep. Williams.

Legislature sets later school start times

Olympia – Senate Bill 5372 was introduced yesterday by Senators Cooper Woodruff, Kate Robertson, and



Cole Riley. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprived teens and will promote the health and academic success of our students,” said Sen. Robertson. Recent studies show that 85 percent of teens in the U.S. receive less than 8.5 hours of sleep per night, far below the recommended amount. “When adolescents are tired they have a higher likelihood of depression, as well as a higher risk of metabolic and nutritional problems,” said Sen. Woodruff. This bill proposes to require all public middle school and high schools to start no earlier than 8:45 a.m. Nineteen states already have changed their start times with positive results, according to the senators.

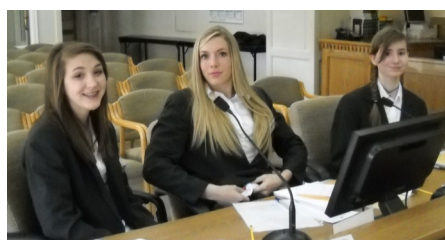
Senate proposes 3-pronged approach to homelessness

Olympia – Senate Bill 7373 was introduced yesterday by Senators Dietrich Hanson, Derek Huang, and Paul Foster.



“This bill addresses the issue of homelessness in Washington and will significantly decrease the number of people on our streets,” said Sen. Hanson. Over the past five years, homeless student numbers have risen by over 50 percent, according to the senators. “More than 24,000 children are now homeless in Washington State,” said Sen. Huang. The bill proposes to establish teen outreach programs to care for homeless youth, initiate various infrastructure and industrial projects to create jobs for the unemployed, and increase funding for homeless shelters. “Our plan is to redistribute funds from other departments to pay for these projects,” said Sen. Foster.

Lawmakers sack plastic bag pollution



Olympia – House Bill 2013 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Katie Sisson, Amanda McMahon, and Reagan Yonek. “This

bill addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution and will help clean up our environment,” said Rep. Sisson. Current research shows that plastic bags will take 500 to 1,000 years to decompose in landfills. They are the fifth most common debris item found on beaches. The country spends millions of dollars in plastic bag cleanup alone, according to the lawmakers. In addition, 100,000 marine animals die from ingesting decomposed plastic particles from the bags each year. “Since alternative paper bags contain chemicals, we want to promote carrying reusable bags into stores,” said Sen. Yonek. If this bill becomes a law, a five cent fee will be charged in grocery and retail stores when plastic bags are provided. Environmental awareness programs will be promoted at schools, as well. Money collected from the fees will be used to purchase and position more trash cans in public places across the state for proper disposal of litter.

Honeybees decline may be aided by limiting pesticides, say senators

Olympia – Senate Bill SB 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senators Sarah Jackson, Graecanne Moses, and Ryan Lubach. “This



bill addresses the issue of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) in honeybees and will protect the bee colonies in Washington State,” said Sen. Jackson. In the last 20 years the number of colonies in the United States has gone from about seven million to little more than two million colonies, according to the lawmakers. The Washington State Beekeepers Association estimates that statewide losses have been between 35 percent and 50 percent in recent years. “Since eight out of 10 of our valuable state crops, like apples, are bee dependent, a loss in the honeybee population can harm the state’s agricultural economy,” said Sen. Moses. The bill will require all farmers to limit the amount of pesticides such as neonicotinoids to a third of the current allowance per acre until further research can verify whether they pose a monumental threat to the well being of honey bees.

You snooze, you lose!



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Eva Huentelman, Krista Jones and Sarah Huentelman introduced Senate Bill

6473, which addresses the issue of sleep deprived teens. “The bill is a good one because it will enhance the learning of our high schoolers,” said Sen. Eva Huentelman. Experts recommend that teens get 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep each night, but 85 percent get less than the recommended amount. “Science tells us that adolescents have a big change in the circadian rhythm that controls sleep and wakefulness. This biological change makes it very difficult for them to go to bed and wake up early,” said Sen. Jones. To improve the academic success of teens, the legislature will require school districts to start no earlier than 9 a.m. “This should help teens absorb information better because

they will be well rested and able to focus,” said Sen. Sarah Huentelman.

Cut-off week brings bill process closer to end of session

This week bills were voted out of fiscal committees on Tuesday as they continued through the lawmaking process. On the floors of the House of Representatives and Senate, pages got a first-hand look at how parliamentary procedure is used by lawmakers as they considered bills that remain active. Hundreds of bills have been introduced in the two chambers this session, but only about 15-20 percent will actually become laws. Pages were busy on the floors of both chambers all week, delivering documents, listening to their legislators express their views and watching the voting process. House and Senate members have only two more weeks to amend and pass legislation and send bills in their final form to the Governor for his signature by the session’s end on April 28.

Children in smoke –filled cars face health dangers



Olympia – Senate Bill 6892 was introduced yesterday by Senators Bailey Griffin, Christina Dias, and Jesse Noelek. “This bill addresses the issue of secondhand smoke in cars and will help keep our

children healthy,” said Sen. Dias. Second-hand smoke from adult drivers can harm young passengers. Adults put minors in the car at risk for asthma attacks, respiratory and ear infections, bronchitis, and an increased threat for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. The 250 toxic chemicals in cigarettes are known to cause cancer. Smoking is responsible for more than 46,000 heart disease deaths in non-smokers in the U.S. alone, according to the senators. “Essentially, this bill will make the act of smoking in a car with minors under the age of 18 illegal. We need to protect the health of children in our state,” said Sen. Griffin. The bill will begin as a secondary offense and violators will pay a fine of up to \$100. The senators hope that passing this bill will also give a nudge to help people quit smoking.

Senators advocate for elimination of standardized testing for graduation



Olympia – Senate Bill 5678 was introduced yesterday by Senators Raven Myers, Arjun Na-

rayan, and Mackenzie O'Keefe. "This bill addresses the issue of standardized testing requirements for graduation in public high schools," said Sen. Myers. The lawmakers contend that these tests do not accurately represent a student's skills and are a financial burden to the state budget. "Rather than improve student achievement as promised, the American education system has instead dropped from 18th to 31st internationally in math, with similar drops in science," said Sen. Narayan. The tests are unfair to students who have moved to the U.S. recently and those that have special needs. "The tests do not prepare students adequately for the real world," said Sen. O'Keefe. Senate Bill 5678 will eliminate the statewide graduation testing requirement. These include the HSPE and the various end-of-course tests in science and math.

Too many students have weak science/math skills



Olympia – Senate Bill 5001 was introduced yesterday by Senators Nancy Lugalia and Joseph Braskett. "This bill addresses the issue of low science and math skills in our students and will better prepare them for the future global job market," said Sen. Lugalia. By the time our students are ready to leave high school and enter higher education or the labor force, they have such poor science and math skills that they are unable to succeed, according to the senators. "They are significantly weaker than

their peers in other countries," said Sen. Braskett. In addition, Among teachers of high school biology and life science classes, approximately 31 percent of them do not have at least a minor in the class they are teaching. If this bill becomes a law, teachers will pass tests to qualify to teach and the state will provide books and teaching methods from countries that rank in the top tier in math and science. "The scores shown on the Third International Mathematics and Science study will increase dramatically and our students will be better equipped to compete for global jobs in the future," said Sen. Lugalia.

Global future at stake for Washington students



Olympia – House Bill 1337 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Kara Duval-Fowler, Dawson Honey and Angel Madera. "This bill addresses the issue of math and science education and will improve academic performance in these areas of study in all public schools," said Rep. Duval-Fowler. In 2010 approximately 50 percent of students did not meet standards in the 10th grade science high school proficiency exam. "Internationally, we rank 16th and 28th in science and math, respectively," said Rep. Honey. This bill will mandate teaching higher levels of math and science before eighth grade. A test will be administered in Algebra I and either biology, physics or chemistry after eighth grade. "If the average student does not pass the test, the school will be supported by the state to train teachers, mentor students, and generally assist the school in meeting these new, international standards. This is the change Washington needs to put our students on a level with other countries so they can compete for future global jobs," said Rep. Madera.

Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool> This newsletter has been posted there.

Mental health check is focus of new gun violence law



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Lily Goldsmith, Kennon Maurer, and Michael Lo introduced House Bill 2999, which addresses the issue of gun

violence. “The bill is a good one because it will keep our communities safer,” said Rep. Goldsmith. The lawmakers contend that most of the people using weapons in mass shootings are mentally ill. “Mentally ill people should not be allowed to own guns,” said Rep. Maurer. This legislation creates a task force to do background checks that include the mental stability of the person wanting to buy a firearm.

The task force would be financed through a \$10 fee to file an application. “The committee would have access to any psychiatric diagnosis or any run-ins with mental health professionals,” said Rep. Lo.

Sleepy heads get some help from the House

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Nneka Amamilo, Sarah Newell and Elena Dickinson introduced House Bill 1000, which addresses the issue of sleep deprived teenagers.



“The bill is a good one because it will improve learning and prevent health problems,” said Rep. Newell. It has been reported that 85 percent of teens get the recommended 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep they need each night. “If high schools start at a later time it will improve student’s alertness, awareness and grades,” said Rep. Amamilo. When the Minneapolis public school districts changed start times from 7:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. they found improvement in attendance and daytime alertness in their students. This bill will require all high schools to change times from 30 minutes to an hour later in the morning.

Guest speakers visit Page School

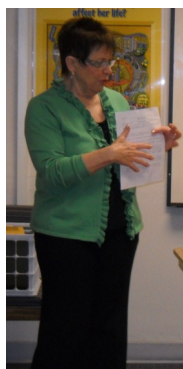


Sen. Mark Mullet (D-Issaquah) from the 5th district, contract lobbyist Heather Hansen, and newly elected Secretary

of State Kim Wyman joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. All guests shared insightful information about their jobs. Pages were able to ask questions and share their own views in response to the speakers’ comments.



Teachers passionate about civic education



The Washington State Legislature’s 2013 Page School employs certificated civics teachers Judi Orr and Lisa McGrath. Judi is a retired social studies and English teacher who taught for over 35 years in

the Clover Park School District, and Lisa has been teaching over 15 years in public high schools and at the college level in North Carolina. “I just moved to Washington in November and am loving learning about my new state,” said Lisa. Both teachers enjoyed meeting students from all parts of Washington and teaching them more about how state government functions. “My favorite activities are watching committee hearings and Supreme Court cases. Seeing citizens testify at public hearings alongside experts in the field is just fascinating to me. And I love trying to figure out how the justices might vote after hearing their cases,” said Judi.

Watch us live at TVW.org

Search for Page School in the Archives to watch yourself in the committee hearings.

Competitive edge results in *Jeopardy* win

On Friday pages tested their knowledge of the Legislative process in a spirited game of *Jeopardy*. Winning teams were awarded certificates and brightly colored stickers that they wore proudly for the rest of the day.



Page program over 120 years old

The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served in past years. The first female page served in 1937. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional and include delivering campus correspondence, helping with mailings in legislative offices, and handing out documents on the floor of the Senate and House.

